



**THE REFEREND DR. FRIDERICH FORNER**

**NEW UNERHÖRTE ERSCHRÖCKLICHE WARHAFTIGE  
WUNDERGESCHICHT SO SICH IN DER STATT EDAM IN  
HOLLAND (...) ZUGETRAGEN (...) HAT**

**NEW, UNHEARD-OF, FEARSOME, GENUINE, MIRAC-  
ULOUS EVENT THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE (...) IN THE CITY  
OF EDAM IN HOLLAND (...)**

**1 6 0 2**

translation:

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## SOURCE

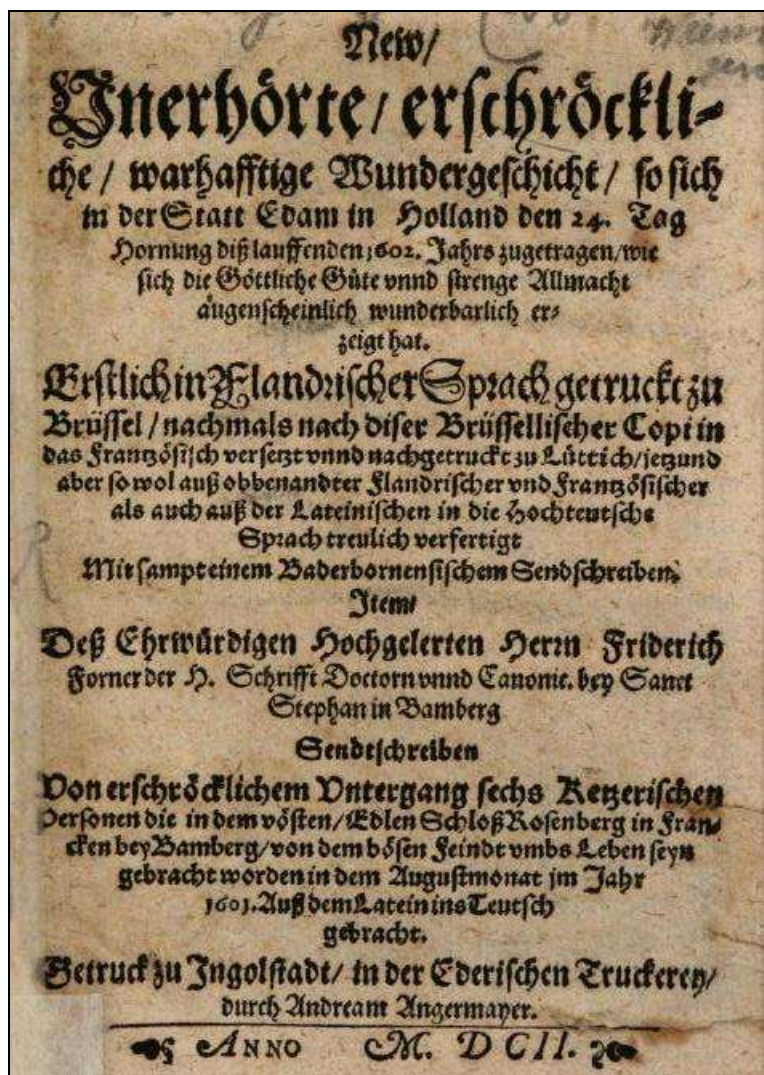
1602, Ingolstadt

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## IMAGE COVER

The image shows the Monnickendam Gate at Edam, but constitutes no part of the original manuscript.

COVER TEXT



## TRANSLATION COVER TEXT

New,  
unheard-of, fearful,  
genuine, miraculous event that  
in the city of Edam in Holland has taken place  
on the 24st day of February<sup>1</sup> in this current year 1602; how  
the divine goodness and severe omnipotence apparently  
has demonstrated itself miraculously.

For the first time printed into the  
Flemish language at  
Brussels. Afterwards translated after this Brussel copy  
into French and printed at Liège. Now  
also from the above mentioned Flemish and French,  
as well from Latin into the Standard German  
language highly faithfully produced,  
together with an epistle from Paderborn.

Also  
from the reverend, highly educated gentleman Friderich  
Forner, doctor in the Holy Scriptures and the canonical at  
St.-Stefanus at Bamberg  
the epistle  
about the fearful demise of six heretical  
persons who in the noble castle of Rosenberg of the ruler in  
Franken near Bamberg have been killed by the evil enemy in  
the month of August of the year  
1601. Translated from Latin into German.

Printed at Ingolstadt in the Ederic Printing Office  
by Andreas Angermayer.

Anno 1602.

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<sup>1</sup> “den 24. Tag Hornung”.

## PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR

There are many stories circulating about strange phenomena that have unfolded in Europe and have a religious connotation. The figure of Christ, the angels and the devil play a part in it. Main theme is the struggle between good and evil, and the retribution for sins committed by human beings.

The present narration pictures a number of divine interventions in Edam, as a retribution for blasphemous practices that are said to have taken place there. Several soldiers from Ostend would have made ridiculous the Catholic faith, its Ministers and rituals. For this the responsible ones were punished. Remarkably enough not from a direct divine judgement, but through the devil. This is noteworthy, because he - who after all is said to be the instigator of the blasphemies - has become the divine instrument that punishes those blasphemies. Evil punishes itself, appears from this.

The fact that Ostendian soldiers are brought on the scene, can be explained historically. This manuscript dates from halfway the Eighty Years' War. About 1600 troops of the Netherlands made an attempt to eliminate the last protestant bastion at Ostend. This made protestants exit from Flanders to the north. Edam by the way played a part among the cities who detached themselves from the Spanish dominance. The soldiers from Ostend, obviously protestants, had ample reason to resist the Catholics, which shapes the frame of the present manuscript. Whether the actions of the soldiers have actually taken place is unclear. The picturing of them is very plastic at any rate. Dragons, devils and fearful shapes play a part in it. That there would have been a fire is a historical fact. In 1602 the Big Church burned down through lightning, and numerous houses around it - in the Grote Kerkstraat - were lost. It may be clear



that the stories about the intervention by the devil may have a symbolical meaning, and that there can be no question of actual events at that point. Yet the accounts have not been devised as a fable, but they are recorded as a journalist would do.

Not only the Ostendian soldiers allegedly were punished for their audacities, as from the report it appears that also the citizens of Edam themselves were afflicted. The explanation that we may come up with, is the fact that the two mayors of Edam were present at one of the binges; that the soldiers were abundantly provided with beer by the council; and that the soldiers tried everywhere to interest Catholics for accompanying them on their processions. That would have made the town partly responsible for the blasphemies. That there would have been two mayors at the same time is peculiar. Alas the official list of Edam mayors starts with a reference per 1792, so I have not been able to see who must have been involved.

With regard to Edam five themes are emerging in the manuscript. Firstly the presence of Ostendian soldiers, which in the time of the Eighty Years' War is not inexplicable, although it remains unclear if their arrival is an historical fact. Secondly the blasphemies that would have been committed by the soldiers mentioned. This is historically unclear as well. Thirdly the lightning by fire of the church tower (the hood was destroyed), and the demolition of many houses. This is a historical fact. This lightning would count as a punishment for the alleged blasphemies. This is an interpretation by the authors of the manuscript. Fourthly the devil who would have caused this burst of fire under numerous shapes - among which that of a dragon. An obvious fiction. Fifthly the punishment of the Ostendian soldiers by the devil. The same goes for this.

Another part of the manuscript deals with the events in Franken near Bamberg, in the castle of Rosenberg. There a ghost story is mentioned, with which nasty animal and human shapes were observed. Without any introduction there is talk about heretics who would have perished, and only a bit further on it becomes clear what they are said to have perpetrated.

Moreover in the history of the castle of Rosenberg persons are punished who were not blasphemous from themselves, but only became so after they had been handled by the devil.

The manuscript is a compilation of different testimonies. With that the authors are not mentioned. Therefore dr. Forner seems to be the one who has collected these testimonies. Striking with this is, that the testimonies converge in a number of places. Of course the description by attentive witnesses will have similarities, but this does not apply to the choice of words. For instance, when there is talk of an apparent miraculous sign, known over the whole world; and of an event that has been characterized and confirmed by witnesses and is miraculous. The converging phrasings indicate, that the texts are either of one and the same author, or have been streamlined by the compiler of the manuscript in his own wordings. In any case it cannot be a coincidence.

As regards the tempora I may observe that many sentences - as is usual in writings of this period - have incomplete predicates, which makes it impossible to see whether the sentence is meant to be in the present or past tense. If this distinction has been made however, these tempora sometimes come in succession of each other. In the translation I have used the past tense.

The translation begins after 'THE TEXT'. The short headings after that, each and every time at the beginning of the accounts, are part of the original manuscript.

Ruud Muschter

## THE TEXT



New, unheard-of, fearsome, genuine,  
miraculous event that has taken place in the city of Edam  
in Holland on the 24th day of February in this current  
year of 1602.

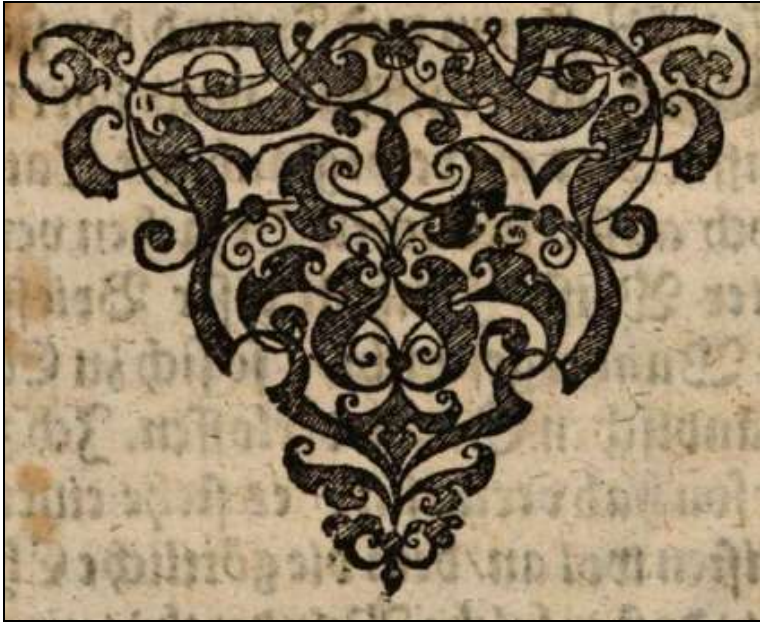
To the benevolent reader.

Faithful reader, I have received a letter from an eminent, important lord and friend, who is especially well-known to me, who abides in Holland and lives there. A sincere, believing<sup>2</sup>, Catholic gentleman, but for important reasons in a hidden and unknown fashion. The contents of this letter is an unheard-of miraculous event, that has taken place at Edam, in a Dutch city. I, as regards my person, was of the opinion that it befits a Christian very well - to whom the divine honour is close and appealing - that he does not rebuke such miraculous deeds, nor blenches for them. But so much as is in to it, so much - in order that the whole world is made familiar with this so apparent miracle of God, as can be well understood from reading the next epistle - it be also brightly and clearly noticed how endlessly the omnipotence of the divine majesty is present and how unfathomable and inextinguishable the treasure of his merciful goodness is. Furthermore you, good-hearted reader, must be convinced that this is a characterized, well-known,

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<sup>2</sup> “alt-rechtgläubiger”.

fully genuine miraculous deed, confirmed by all kinds of tested faith testimonies. According to the transmitted epistle, it has thus taken place.





In the beginning of this 1602nd year, on the sunday *Quinquagesima*<sup>3</sup>, that at the time fell on February 17th, a rare intention and act of resentment has occurred amongst Ostendian soldiers. These soldiers were in a war group or company that from Ostend had advanced in a defensive siege.<sup>4</sup> These thirty persons have therefore been able to escape and have arrived in a northern town of Holland, named Edam, where out of extremely audacious courage they exhibited all kinds of scandalous mockery, with an extreme despising and ridiculing of the ornaments, ceremonies and clerical usages of the Catholic faith, with which in the manner of the poisoned heretics and overconfident, rough folks they made fun with unheard-of blasphemy, and in the following manner at Shrove Tuesday provoked such a godless, provocative pastime.

Each of them put on a shirt over his garment. One of them however was clad with a priestly vestment and an alb.<sup>5</sup> In his hands he carried a wafer or wafer. They also had a vessel full of water, as if it was a Holy water font. From it, one of them in a scornful manner sprinkled with a broom, as if he gave out the Holy water.

And these detractors dealt with such an attentive arrangement in this manner, and kept the cortege or procession. Besides other contorted clerical cantos they very often repeated these words and sang with a loud and distorted voice: *Dominus vobiscum*.

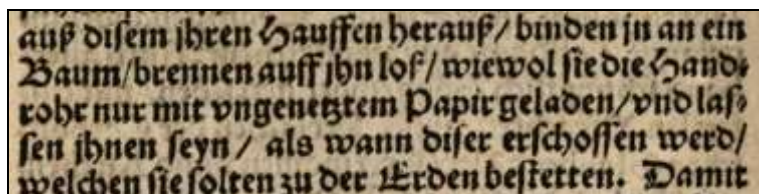
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<sup>3</sup> The sunday before Ash Wednesday.

<sup>4</sup> “inn wehrender Belägerung”. Obviously with this a tactical withdrawal or escape is meant.

<sup>5</sup> In fact this is the same.

With which singing they performed a scornful chorus and their scoffing procession up to the church. As soon however as they had approached it they played a new play, by initiating the church. Those in the alb walked on front; the others were clerics and followed after them. They proceeded with their religion, got someone from their group over, bound him to a tree, fired at



auff disem ihren Hauffen herauff / binden in an ein  
Baum / brennen auff ihn lof / wiewol sie die Hande  
rohe nur mit vngenehmem Papir geladen / vnd las-  
sen ihnen seyn / als wann diser erschossen werd-  
welchen sie solten zu der Erden bestetten. Damit

him, although they had their blunderbusses loaded merely with rough paper<sup>6</sup>, and made him be like being shot dead and like having to be buried by them. So with this also the ceremonies of the Catholic burial were despised. This means that they behaved as if they would bury this allegedly died person completely with honour at the old-religious<sup>7</sup> manner with great splendour.

After this they levered him again into the grave and brought him into the above mentioned church, where they were treated four barrels of beer by the gents. Next they squatted together and set together, dragged and sang as long as it took to having sung the barrel empty. The two mayors of Edam have also been present with that. The next day they teased one whom they clad with episcopal attire, put on him a bisshop's head and a pair of spectacles or eyeglasses on his nose. In the hand they gave him

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<sup>6</sup> Read: 'blanks'.

<sup>7</sup> "altgläubigen". In a stricter sense only those who remained a Catholic after the Reformation, or again became a Catholic. So it is about a moment after 1517.

a big, burning candle. And after they had laughed enough about their bisshop, and also had performed miracles and in a godless manner much ridiculous nonsense, they finally asked their reverend with the spectacles if he did not comprehend his error. Upon which this scoundrel answered: "What good is this burning candle to me, or this eyeglass for seeing, as I do not want to see?" Finally they have placed him in a little boat, pushed him off from the bank and let him boating and streaming. It is impossible to tell all the scandalous speeches and ignominious deeds, with which to the mockery of the Catholic faith they have abused the holy ceremonies of the Christian churches in a senseless manner. Also it had already been determined and decided to repeat similar and even other mocking plays and blasphemies on the first sunday of the Lent, on February 24th. This day they had already destined for such an outrageous calumny. But the strong, eternal God has resisted their tumultuous, godless intention with an unheard-of miraculous token, apparently known to the whole world. For on the above mentioned 24th day of February between the 4th and 5th hour in the morning<sup>8</sup> the fiery lightning and thunder jet has propelled from the heavens over the city of Edam towards the tower, and in the clap of thunder the devil has shot through in the shape of a flying, fire breathing dragon. With his dragon's tail (which was like a comet glowing with sparks) he has entwined the tower up high and began to continuously throttle fire from his muzzle and to shoot the spat up fire flames into the four houses which were closest to the tower. Seemingly one has also seen and heard how the evil enemy has sung *Domms vobiscum* and has uttered all kinds of similar mockeries, which the previous sunday had been imitated by the thirty Ostend soldiers to the scorn and derogation of the Catholic faith. The citizens did their utmost to bring a piece of field artillery in front of the tower, in order that they might tear the tower down, and that the flames through the fall would also be killed and

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<sup>8</sup> "vor Tags".



asphyxiated. But this assault was not continued, because the construction of the field artillery blew itself up, broke into pieces and ended on a pile. Therefore the whole tower has been consumed in the fire.<sup>9</sup> Also, the flame has completely engulfed the whole church at eight o'clock in the morning and burned it to the ground. This was not all that happened, because this miraculous emergency fire has consumed sixty houses in a circle into ashes. But there has been one single house which, albeit it had stood in the middle between these burning houses, yet not without a special miraculous sign and divine protection was saved and kept completely unharmed from such a general emergency fire. This was the house of a priest, in which in those days several of the good, pious believers<sup>10</sup> of the generation of these priests were living yet.

Without doubt this is a very grand miracle of God.

Today somebody from Monnickendam<sup>11</sup> has come to see me, who confirms, how the churches<sup>12</sup> up to this day are in smoke and flames and are burning. Alledgedly this fire could not be extinguished by any water.<sup>13</sup> Yes, he who was touched by one single spark of this fire, could not be saved from the horrendous hazard of the fire, nor could the fire be extinguished until somebody would completely submerge in the water. This above mentioned person further tells, that if the citizens of Hoorn and Monnickendam had not come so strongly to the assistance of

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<sup>9</sup> Only the roof was lost however, although the restoration took 24 years.

<sup>10</sup> "Altgläubigen".

<sup>11</sup> "Munickinden." In Monnickendam great fires raged in 1499 and 1513.

<sup>12</sup> So here is talk of more churches.

<sup>13</sup> Probably because in the medieval cities firestorms with a tremendous sucking effect came into being through the utmost inflammable building materials.

those of Edam out of neighbouring compassion, the whole city would have been burned in this miserable fiery jeopardy. This truly is a merely unheard-of punishment, and an exceptionally big damage accrued to the city of Edam.

Good-hearted reader, just now that I am writing this letter, another messenger comes to inform me, how the thirty above mentioned Ostendian soldiers have almost all been dismally killed and burned in this fire.



Epistle sent from Paderborn to Regensburg, about the above mentioned fearsome, miraculous event in the city of Edam.

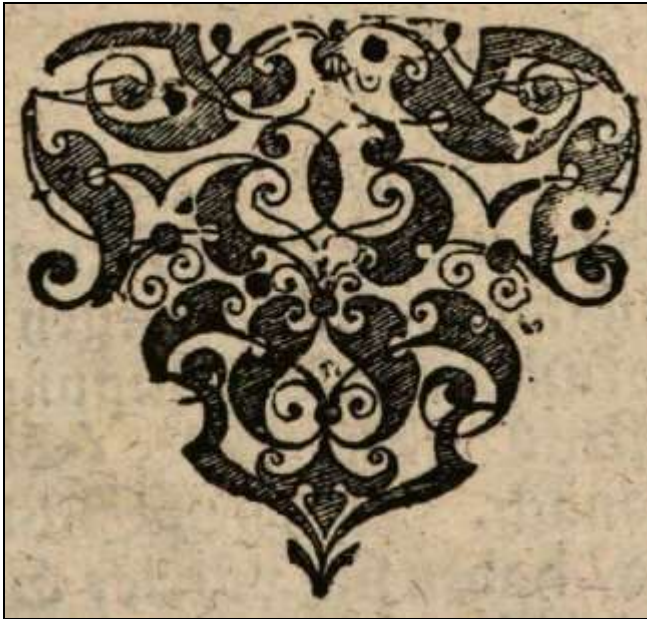
From Latin faithfully translated into German.

Somebody from the Netherlands has told me, that in the Dutch town of Edam at Shrove Tuesday some to the mockery and shame of the Catholic faith have arranged a march or procession clothed in white, amongst whom someone has borne a monstrance with a host or wafer. Thus they have circumvented the town, have knocked on the Catholic houses, and have summoned that one should come outside to worship their God. Also the council in the above mentioned city has honoured them with numerous barrels of beer. But another reward and veneration has been meted out by God the Lord. For on the eighth day hereafter the evil enemy apparently has shown himself in the shape of a gruesome monster and miraculous animal, which also many times has changed itself in a manifold of horrendous shapes of unique animals, and ultimately similar to a very big, fearsome dragon has gone up in the sky and with

an dem achten Tag nach diesem / hat sich der böse  
Feind augenscheinlich sehen lassen / in Gestalt ei-  
nes grewlichen Monstri vnnnd Wunderthiers / wel-  
ches sich auch in vielerley abschewliche Gestalt sel-  
bamer Thier vielmahls verstelllet / vnnnd lezlich

the very long dragon's tail has wrapped up the tower several times. And look, instantly the tower was set on fire. The church

as well had began burning, which fearful fire burned down more than forty houses to the ground. In the middle however of these houses stood the house of a Catholic priest that had remained unscathed by this fire, which house (when the danger of the fire threatened to creep nearer) has been sprinkled with holy water. The above mentioned person, who has told all this, has it from his sister, who has just at the same moment been personally present in Holland at Edam, and also has seen this miraculous event with her own eyes, et cetera. Given in Paderborn, April 16th, in the year 1602.





Epistle about the miraculous and fearful  
demise of six heretical persons, who in the sturdy and  
noble castle of Rosenberg in Franken near Bamberg have been  
put to death by the evil enemy  
in the month of August of the 1601st year.

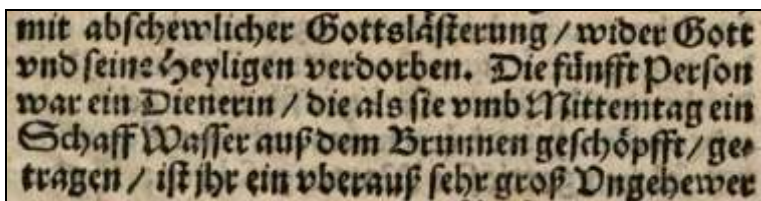
I might want to be able to explain long-windedly and satisfactorily, with all kinds of presented circumstances, what has transpired to everybody's surprise in these surroundings these days<sup>14</sup>, but I prefer to keep it short. It is a miraculous event to hear, and also unbelievable if it would not be openly characterized by everybody in the vicinity and known by them, and confirmed by all kinds of testimonies. In the landscape of the reverend ruler and lord, the lord bishop at Bamberg, et cetera, there is a famous and important castle, named Rosenberg, that because of a nicely situated environment and skilful placement is a well-built and sturdy place, located on a mountain height, near Cronach. In this castle quite some time ago many ghosts and miraculous phenomena have made themselves seen and heard, both at clear daylight and at night. They presented themselves in the shape of an ibex or he-goat, and also of a monstrous bull or dragon, sometimes resembling raging horses and donkeys, and at some moments a group of fire breathing horsemen; then again like a black, horrible Moor, or even often in the shape of a woman, whose countenance was misshapen through manure and other mess. Those who were living in the castle were very plagued by such a dreadful ghost, but were not wounded or harmfully touched. With the exception of Lutherans and Calvinists none of the believers<sup>15</sup> has perished.

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<sup>14</sup> "dise Tag".

<sup>15</sup> "Altrechtgläubigen".

The hereticals who have been killed, were with six persons. Two of them were hurled down from the steps and there they told, how they had been nudged and thrown by a fearful miraculous animal, after which incident they quickly saw their lives ending. The third one has virtually died through a similar fall. The fourth one, a lakey of the chieftain in this castle, fled when he encountered this ghost on the stairs, but was seized by the hair and cornered. He became ferocious, in which blazing condition he dismally perished after three days, with horrendous



mit abschewlicher Gottslästerung / wider Gott  
vnd seine Heyligen verdorben. Die fünfft Person  
war ein Dienerin / die als sie vmb Mittertag ein  
Schaff Wasser auß dem Brunnen geschöpfft / ge-  
tragen / ist ihr ein vberaus sehr groß Ungeheuer

blasphemy towards God and His saints. The fifth person was a little servant-girl who, when around noon she had brought water - that she had scooped from the well - to a sheep, encountered an exceptional, very big monster. It was very horrendous to behold and offered her a letter. Whether it was a truly written letter, or a mere false appearance, one does not know. When the servant-girl refused to accept this letter, she was seized by her right femur and grasped hard. And in such a way that she - trembling with this terror and pain - cast the sheep away from her. She has also showed five indentational characteristics in her femur to the complete domestic staff, just as if when they had been burned in with a hot iron. Soon the flesh fell off decomposing from these spots, and she died after three days.

The sixth and last one, who was strangled in the month of August that passed by, was a venomous Calvinist, who - when he had seen the sign and the portrait of the holy cross - had assaulted it with taunting and mocking laughter and blemishing phrases. Yes, when he saw those who after Catholic usage

blessed themselves with the sign of the holy cross, he insulted them for being jesters and idols. Still on the same evening that he had been thrown down over the tower - which was forty-six cubits high -, and that a good, reasonable man (the things I am telling now are also certified by many other present persons) crossed himself when he heard the evil enemy mentioned, this Calvinist has produced the following godless words: "Hey, you jester, what good is this vague work to you? It is dirty (out of reverence I ask excuse for such words)<sup>16</sup>, as if you throw a handful of cow dung in the face." Everybody disliked this gross, godless, defamatory language, but on top of that he also uttered all kinds of scandalous language and blasphemy. The divine revenge has not left such a wickedness unpunished, and this even that same night, when he was with his junker (the name of whom out of reverence I shall leave unmentioned) whose disciplinarian he formerly was and whose caretaker he was now. When he, I say, had gone to rest and lay in a bed next to the junker, the punishment has seized him. Besides them there were two servants in the same room together. The light still burned in the middle of the room. Between nine and ten o'clock in the evening a soldier who then was the sentinel outside the castle on the wall, stood opposite the tower in which the blasphemous heretic lay. And see: hardly had he heard a swift, effervescing violence of a tempest, or high in the sky he also sees very big, fire breathing bullets who in a circle around the tower shoot through the air. And in the middle of them he hears a lamenting sighing and pitiful groaning, which with force is torn to and fro through the air.

The soldier startles by this miraculous sight and calls with a clear voice the sweet name of Jesus and of the blessed virgin Mary. For he was a Catholic and in the blink of an eye saw that the above mentioned godless one was thrown down with a great

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<sup>16</sup> This is the comment of the narrator of the event. Here it stands somewhat awkward in the middle of the quote.

row, and that at the same time the fiery flames spread over the forest that they had rushed onto with great force, and crackling.

Also the soldier has fallen to the ground as the result of a severe alarm and trembled on all limbs of his body. But after a while he came round and regained strength. He crossed himself with the sign of the holy cross and called his comrades in arms, who quickly approached with a lamp. They found the poor, above mentioned Calvinist, who had been thrown down from the tower, already dead. The surprising thing in this case however, is that of his body no single limb was found to be wounded, with the exception of the soles of his feet.

Later the chieftain has been woken up together with all the others. They have walked into the room in which the candle was still burning. The junker, from whom the above mentioned person had been abducted from the side, had slept very deeply, as had also the other two servants who were in a deep sleep in the same room. The evil enemy has abducted him through a very narrow window to the outside.<sup>17</sup>

This rapidly has become public in the whole country, so that almost no one dared to live in this castle so quickly anymore. And the chieftain himself has gone to our referend ruler and lord, et cetera, to report this and to ask for advice, in order that this significant and well-conserved castle would in a war emergency be a certain refuge for the bishops and otherwise would become uninhabited.

Albeit that many priests had been talked to about this, they declined it, and I freely acknowledge my reservedness<sup>18</sup> and

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<sup>17</sup> “Die bösen Feind haben disen durch (...)”. This can only relate to the abducted man.

<sup>18</sup> “Zagheit”. Has several meanings, varying from faintheartedness to peacefulness. Also compare with ‘zögern’, ‘to hesitate’.



that I have done this as well, for in such a most important and dangerous affair I deemed myself too insignificant and too less experienced. As my most merciful ruler and lord seriously ordered me and also commanded me to obey him that I should seek advice in this matter, I have followed this order - although unwillingly. And after preceding, continuous prayer and fasting (as it is customary), I did arrive after one and a half day's travelling (because so far away is this castle of Bamberg situated), and found everything just as I have told it. I have given the order that in the extraordinary chamber exactly the same bed as from which the godless person had been ripped was prepared for me and another priest - my companion -, and beforehand sprinkled with holy water.

In the morning we have, on the basis of a special order by our referend ruler and lord, et cetera, erected an altar at the mentioned window. And after the task of the Holy Mass had been performed (in which I also had the Second Book of *The City of God* of saint Augustin<sup>19</sup> as a teacher), the evil spirits, when they were adjured, have vanished. In what manner and along which path this has happened however, as to that I think it is better to be silent about it, rather than describe it.

Next we have gone through all chambers and rooms of the whole castle, have sprinkled them with holy water in conformity with the usage of the Catholic church, and have applied other customary ceremonies. Thus mainly through the power of this holy sacrament and other ones of the Catholic clerical prayers it has happened, that this castle has become freed and secured from such monsters. This has taken place in the first autumn month of this 1601st year.

I take it, that amongst several other and important reasons on the basis of which this plague has been applied by God, the

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<sup>19</sup> "den heyligen Augustinum libro 2. de Civitate Dei".

frequent cursing has also been a cause; the severe abuse in which in this environment one wishes the other to have the devil on his neck; all too often introduces the devil into the conversation and swears by him; also the contempt of the holy cross; not to speak of other causes.

E N D

